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ABSTRACT

This is the fifth in a series of annual reports summarizing the activities and accomplishments of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) program, which is funded and managed by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the U.S. Department of Education. The eight main sections cover: (1) highlights of the year in the areas of database building, electronic communication, and outreach and user services; (2) an overview of the ERIC system, including the clearinghouses, support components, funding, staffing, and the ERIC database; (3) electronic communication, including network access to the ERIC database, AskERIC (an Internet-based service for K-12 educators), ERIC resources on other online services, and other uses of networks by the ERIC system; (4) database building, including increasing quality acquisitions, expanded coverage, and full-text products; (5) user services, including training sessions to promote ERIC and responding to user needs; (6) publications and outreach; (7) collaborations and professional liaisons with other federally funded programs and ERIC Partners, as well as international activities; and (8) management and operations. Future directions are summarized. Exhibits present an OERI/ERIC organizational chart; staffing and funding for 1992; total number of records for the ERIC database; document acceptance versus rejection, 1988-1992; methods used to contact ERIC components, 1988-1992; analysis of ERIC users, 1988-1992; searches completed by ERIC clearinghouses, 1988-1992; and popular ERIC publications. (MES)

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ED359989

1992 Annual Report

Summarizing the Recent Accomplishments of the Educational Resources Information Center

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Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

Prepared by ACCESS ERIC
July 1993

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INTRODUCTION

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) began more than a quarter-century ago as a system to track and disseminate federally sponsored education research. It has evolved into a network of clearinghouses, support components, and partnerships that collectively create and provide access to ERIC's databases, microfiche collections, publications, and other products and services to increase awareness and understanding of the major issues in education. ERIC—which produces the world's largest education database—is both the repository of an extensive collection of materials and an active synthesizer and disseminator of information.

ERIC gives educators, researchers, community members, and students ready access to the most current and important education information. ERIC coverage includes preschool, K–12, postsecondary, and lifelong learning concerns such as community education and workplace training. ERIC can play a supportive role in the education reform and restructuring initiatives that are being implemented in states and school districts across the country. By acquiring, synthesizing, and disseminating information about what works, ERIC empowers its diverse users to find answers to their education questions and to support the attainment of the six National Education Goals.

ERIC has continually sought to present education information in a format convenient to users. More than 20 years ago, ERIC became the first commercial online database. CD-ROM followed, and now ERIC is at the forefront of efforts to make education information available through public networks such as the Internet. In addition to enhanced electronic dissemination, ERIC's priorities include expanding database coverage to include books, increasing user support through toll-free lines at each ERIC Clearinghouse, and packaging the latest research findings and practice-oriented materials in ways that provide maximum value to practitioners, including full-text access where possible.

This annual report highlights ERIC's recent accomplishments and trends and sketches its direction for the coming years.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST YEAR

ERIC Database Building

- By the end of 1992, the ERIC bibliographic database had grown to include records for nearly 800,000 journal articles and documents. Each year, approximately 30,000 new records are added. ERIC will begin to add books to the database in mid-1993.

- In 1992, online access was available through BRS, DIALOG, OCLC, GTE, and, as of November, the European vendor, Data-Star. Commercial online vendors reported that the ERIC database was searched in excess of 100,000 hours last year. CD-ROM subscriptions—estimated at about 2,000 total—are offered by DIALOG and SilverPlatter.

- The ERIC database is becoming more accessible as individuals and institutions purchase the ERIC tapes directly from the ERIC Processing and Reference Facility and make the database available on public and private computer networks and through online services. There are now 55 subscribers to the ERIC tapes, and free Internet access to ERIC resources is becoming more widely available.

- ERIC offers the full text of a subset of ERIC documents through the ERIC Digests Online file. ERIC Digests, brief research syntheses prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouses, are among the ERIC system's most popular offerings. To respond to public demand for more full-text summaries of education trends and issues, ERIC is moving to expand this file to include materials from research centers, educational laboratories, and professional associations.

- In the last five years, five Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouses were created to increase database coverage of literacy issues, U.S.–Japan studies, art education, consumer education, and Chapter 1. These adjuncts enhance ERIC's scope at minimal cost to the ERIC Program.

- There are now 906 customers with annual subscriptions to the ERIC microfiche collection, 780 domestic and 126 foreign. Through these collections, individuals can read the full text of ERIC documents on microfiche at universities, school districts, and libraries.

Electronic Communication

- AskERIC, a pilot Internet-based question-answering service for teachers in three states, responded to more than 3,000 questions from educators in its first eight months of operation. An estimated 7,000 to 9,500 individuals per week access the AskERIC Electronic Library, a computerized collection of full-text education resources and database citations on such popular topics as alternative assessment, whole language, and technology in education.

- ERIC information is also available on a number of popular information services that individuals subscribe to at home, including America Online, America Tomorrow, and CompuServe.

Outreach and User Services

- ERIC Clearinghouses, the ERIC Facility, and ACCESS ERIC, the outreach component of the ERIC system, responded to nearly 110,000 letter, phone, electronic, and in-person requests for education information in 1992. Practitioners, including classroom teachers and administrators, make up one of ERIC's largest user groups. The requests were diverse, as exemplified by: a seventh-grader seeking ideas for a science fair project; a legislator conducting research on year-round schooling; an elementary teacher looking for information on using cooperative learning techniques; a literacy volunteer searching for help in teaching basic skills to a prison inmate; a professor inquiring about opportunities for foreign student exchange programs; and, a father preparing a presentation on K–12 computer networks for the local school board.

- As part of ERIC's commitment to accessibility, each ERIC Clearinghouse and support component now has an Internet address for e-mail and electronic dissemination. In addition, every Clearinghouse and support component will have a toll-free phone number by the fall of 1993. ACCESS ERIC will continue to operate 1–800–LET–ERIC for general reference and referral.

- In 1992, ERIC was represented at more than 650 conferences, meetings, and workshops to help familiarize diverse groups with ERIC's products and services. In some cases, ERIC staff sent material to be displayed; in others, they provided hands-on training. School librarians at the American Association of School Librarians conference, for example, attended a User Day that enabled them to visit ERIC online and CD-ROM vendors. Parents at a workshop in rural West Virginia received an introduction to database searching along with print materials on helping their children do well in school. Reading and social studies teachers attending national, regional, and state professional

meetings were introduced to ERIC curriculum materials to enhance their students' writing and critical thinking.

- The ERIC system continues to build strong linkages with national research centers, educational laboratories, education associations, and professional organizations. These partnerships ensure that state-of-the art education findings are added to the ERIC database quickly and that important constituencies are aware of ERIC activities. Partners aid in product development and review and in cooperative outreach efforts, including mailings and presentations.

- The ERIC Clearinghouses created 150 ERIC Digests in 1992, as well as more than 80 additional publications.

THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Office of Educational Research and Improvement/Educational Resources Information Center

ERIC is a decentralized system of clearinghouses and support components operating under the direction of the U.S. Department of Education (see Exhibit 1). ERIC Program staff in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) establish program policy, plan systemwide activities, prepare budget requests and justifications, and set future directions. ERIC Program staff also monitor the work of the ERIC Clearinghouses, provide technical guidance, and approve the development of new materials and services.

ERIC Clearinghouses and Adjunct Clearinghouses

The subject specialists of the ERIC system are found in the 16 ERIC Clearinghouses, each specializing in different areas of education. The Clearinghouses acquire significant literature within their scopes; select the highest quality and most relevant materials; and catalog, index, and abstract them for input into the database. The Clearinghouses also publish research summaries, bibliographies, and information analysis products. In addition, they offer free reference and referral services in their areas of expertise and provide outreach and training to target users.

Together, the Clearinghouses cover broad subject areas that span the entire field of education. The titles in parentheses reflect Clearinghouse name changes that will go into effect in mid-1993: Adult, Career, and Vocational Education; Counseling and Personnel Services (Counseling and Student Services); Educational Management; Elementary and Early Childhood Education; Handicapped and Gifted Children (Disabilities and Gifted Education); Higher Education; Information Resources (Information & Technology); Junior Colleges (Community Colleges); Languages and Linguistics; Reading and Communication Skills (Reading, English, and Communication); Rural Education and Small Schools; Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education; Social Studies/Social Science Education; Teacher Education (Teaching and Teacher Education); Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation (Assessment and Evaluation); and Urban Education.[1]

As educational needs evolve, the ERIC system adds Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouses to its network. Each adjunct is associated with the ERIC Clearinghouse whose scope encompasses its narrower scope. An Adjunct Clearinghouse identifies and acquires significant literature

[1]Because this report reflects activity under the 1988 to 1992 Clearinghouse contract period, the names in effect at that time are used throughout.

within its specialized subject area and may catalog, index, and abstract the literature for inclusion in the ERIC database. The acquired items (processed or unprocessed) are then provided to the ERIC Clearinghouse with which the adjunct is associated for input into the ERIC database. Like the Clearinghouses, the Adjuncts provide free reference and referral services in their areas of expertise. They may also publish research summaries, bibliographies, information analyses, and other products. Adjuncts are funded primarily from resources other than the ERIC Program, although they must follow all ERIC standards for document processing and publication development. In the last five years, five Adjunct Clearinghouses have been created: the National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education for Limited-English-Proficient Adults and Out-of-School Youth (adjunct to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics), the National Clearinghouse for United States–Japan Studies (adjunct to the ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education), the Adjunct Clearinghouse for Art Education (adjunct to the ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education), the Adjunct Clearinghouse on Chapter 1 (adjunct to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education), and the Adjunct Clearinghouse on Consumer Education (adjunct to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education).

ERIC Support Components

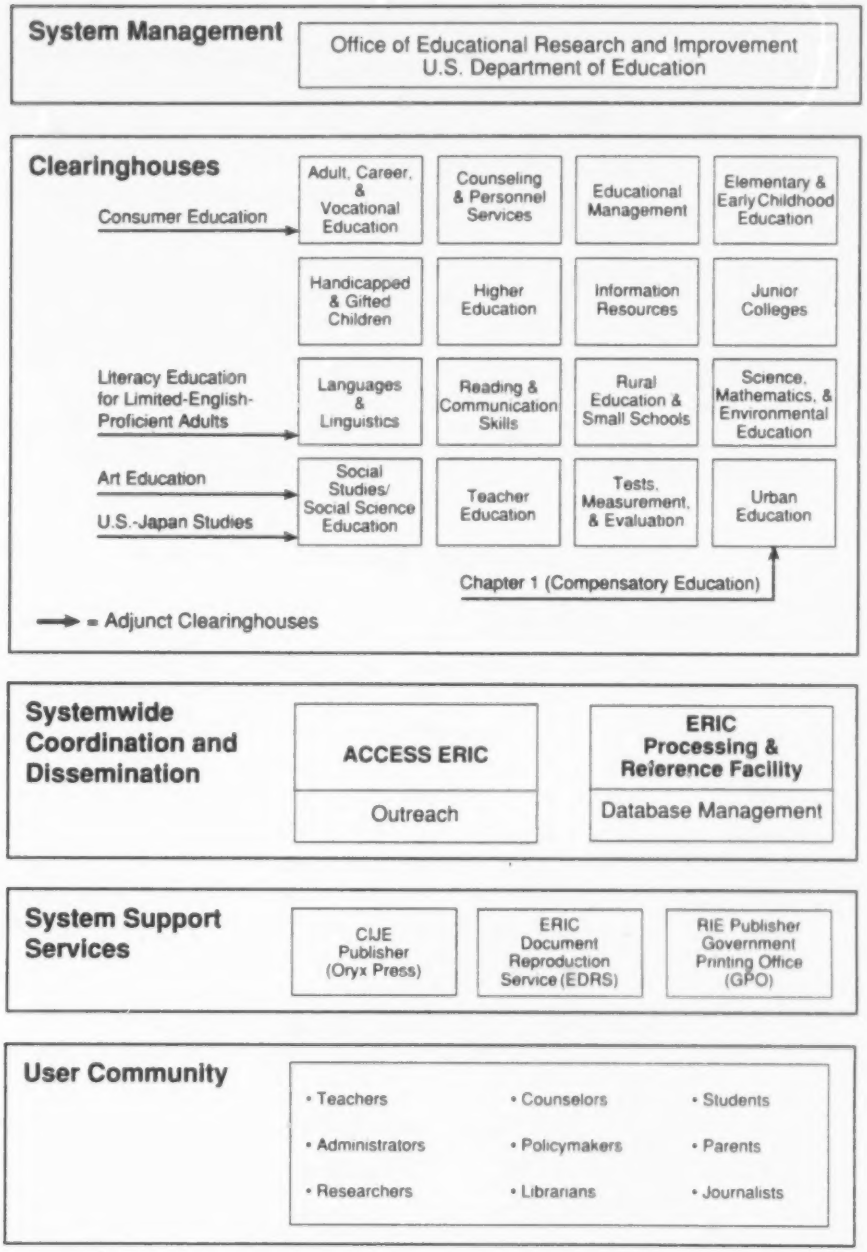
Whereas ERIC Clearinghouses provide subject-specific expertise, ERIC support components are responsible for basic operations, including database building and maintenance, document delivery, and production of systemwide publications and reference tools, including directories and indexes.

- **The ERIC Processing and Reference Facility** is the technical hub of the ERIC system, coordinating document processing and database-building activities for ERIC. It also performs acquisition, lexicographic, and referral functions and maintains systemwide quality control standards. The Facility provides technical assistance and copies of the ERIC database and ERIC Digests Online file in machine-readable form to public and private vendors, publishers, and education institutions. In addition, it maintains acquisition agreements and system forms. Its toll-free phone number is 1–800–799–ERIC.

- **The ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS)** produces, markets, and sells microfiche and paper copies of documents in the ERIC database. EDRS serves standing-order customers, including libraries and research centers with ERIC microfiche collections, and maintains a toll-free line (1–800–443–ERIC) to fulfill on-demand orders by individuals seeking paper copies or microfiche of specific documents.

- **ACCESS ERIC** promotes and disseminates ERIC products and services and acts as a referral service between the system and its users by maintaining a toll-free phone line, 1–800–LET–ERIC. ACCESS ERIC prepares and distributes systemwide brochures,

Exhibit 1 OERI/ERIC Organizational Chart



directories, and newsletters and publishes *The ERIC Review*—a serial publication designed to make education research more accessible to practitioners. ACCESS ERIC also maintains several reference and referral databases on education-related information centers, education-related conferences, ERIC information service providers, and ERIC Clearinghouse publications in print, which are available to the public via online access as well as in printed form.

- **Oryx Press and the Government Printing Office**—ERIC relies on the public and private sectors to produce and disseminate ERIC materials. Oryx Press, a commercial publishing firm, publishes and sells *Current Index to Journals in Education* (*CIJE*), the index to the journal articles cited in the ERIC database. Oryx Press also publishes the *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors*, which details keywords that can be used in searching the ERIC database. The U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) prints and sells *Resources in Education* (*RIE*), an index of the non-journal education literature in ERIC. In addition, GPO distributes certain ERIC products on microfiche to depository libraries. These products include *CIJE* and documents announced in the ERIC database that were supported with U.S. Department of Education funding.

System Funding—For FY 1992, approximately $7.1 million was appropriated for ERIC. Of this amount, approximately 80 percent supported the 16 Clearinghouses. The remaining 20 percent was used to print ERIC publications through the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) and fund the operations of three support contractors: the ERIC Processing and Reference Facility (for database building); the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) (for micrographics and document delivery); and ACCESS ERIC (for outreach).

System Staffing—Throughout the ERIC network of contractors, approximately 250 individuals are involved full-time or part-time in creating ERIC products and providing ERIC services. In 1992, contractors worked a total of 265,709 hours; of these, 234,098 were contract hours and 31,611 hours were contributed by the host institutions. (See Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2 ERIC System Staffing and Funding, Fiscal Year 1992

ERIC Component	Contract Hours	Contributed Hours	Total	Funding (in thous.)*
Adult, Career, and Vocational Education	12,947	1,146	14,093	$395
Counseling and Personnel Services	14,574	5,785	20,359	$333
Educational Management	11,665	4,255	15,920	$334
Elementary and Early Childhood Education	11,371	1,740	13,111	$330
Handicapped and Gifted Children	13,570	0	13,570	$347
Higher Education	11,067	7,895	18,962	$385
Information Resources	12,712	1,934	14,646	$347
Junior Colleges	12,955	2,194	15,149	$325
Languages and Linguistics	6,971	383	7,354	$332
Reading and Communication Skills	18,252	2,320	20,572	$408
Rural Education and Small Schools	6,095	250	6,345	$333
Science, Mathematics, & Environmental Education	15,138	1,286	16,424	$338
Social Studies/Social Science Education	14,450	1,457	15,907	$402
Teacher Education	9,360	240	9,600	$336
Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation	6,261	144	6,405	$335
Urban Education	8,832	372	9,204	$335
Adjunct on Literacy Education	6,406	0	6,406	$277
Subtotal - ERIC Clearinghouses	**192,626**	**31,401**	**224,027**	
ERIC Facility	29,600	0	29,600	$896
ACCESS ERIC	11,872	210	12,082	$364
ERIC Document Reproduction Service	N/A	N/A	N/A	$ 41
Subtotal - ERIC Support Components	**41,472**	**210**	**41,682**	
TOTAL	**234,098**	**31,611**	**265,709**	

*Note: Numbers for funding were rounded up to the nearest thousand.

The ERIC Database

The ERIC database dates back to 1966 and contains abstracts for more than three-quarters of a million education articles and documents. It is the world's largest education database, and one of the most frequently searched. ERIC is accessible in print, on CD-ROM, and online through commercial vendors and public and private computer networks.

ERIC use is growing exponentially as more universities, libraries, and state education agencies purchase and mount the ERIC tapes for their own use and the ERIC database becomes available at several host sites via the Internet. Given these multiple access points, it is difficult to pinpoint exact usage statistics. We do know that:

- Online vendors of the ERIC database—BRS, DIALOG, GTE, and OCLC—report approximately 100,000 connect hours for ERIC per year;
- 2,000 sites have purchased ERIC on CD-ROM from DIALOG or SilverPlatter;
- Subscriptions to the print form of the ERIC database—the abstract journals, *Resources in Education* (ERIC documents) and *Current Index to Journals in Education* (ERIC journal articles)—total 2,900;
- Fifty-five subscribers receive ERIC magnetic tapes, add their own search interfaces, and make the database available commercially or at public or private sites;

ED348404
TM019282
The National Education Goals Report 1992: Building a Nation of Learners.
National Education Goals Panel, Washington, DC.
1992
U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, SSOP, Washington, DC 20402.
321 p.; For the 1991 report, see ED 334 280.
EDRS Price - MF01/PC13 Plus Postage.
Numeric /Quantitative Data (110); Reports - Evaluative (142)
U.S.; District-of-Columbia
English
Academic-Standards; Adult-Literacy; Advisory-Committees; Citizenship-Education; Comparative-Analysis; Comparative-Education; Educational-Improvement; Elementary-Secondary-Education; High-School-Graduates; Mathematics-Achievement; School-Readiness
*Academic-Achievement; *Educational-Objectives; *National-Programs
America-2000; Educational-Indicators; National-Education-Goals-Panel; Progress-Reporting; Science-Achievement; Standard-Setting
*National-Education-Goals-1990; *Reform-Efforts
RIEDEC92
This report, the second of two published to date, provides the most current information on progress made toward realizing the six national education goals adopted by the nation's governors and President Bush at an educational summit held in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1989. The goals established a framework for action in terms of readiness for school; high school completion; student achievement and citizenship; science and mathematics; adult literacy and life-long learning; and safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools. The report is organized into 4 main chapters which include, along with narrative text, a total of 127 statistical exhibits, most of them contained in chapter 2. Chapter 1 addresses key questions about the comparative educational standing of the United States across the goals in a global context. Chapter 2, by far the longest in the book, presents basic information about the goals in the following three parts: (1) key indicators that the National Education Goals Panel has chosen to follow throughout the decade; (2) additional indicators that provide a valuable context for and understanding of the status regarding the national goals; and (3) individual profiles of the 50 states and the District of Columbia for 1992 along with baseline statistics from about the time of the summit. Chapter 3 summarizes progress made in the past year in stimulating data gathering and analysis reforms in each goal area. Chapter 4 describes federal efforts to support the national goals. Five appendixes contain supporting details about processes and aims (sources, technical notes, descriptions of federal programs, and full federal agency titles), as well as a complete statement of the goals themselves. A survey sheet is included for public response to this report. (SLD)
LV: 1
CH: TM
FI: ED
DTN: 110; 142

Sample ERIC Database Record

- Thousands of users access the ERIC database through library online public access catalogs and the Internet; and

- ERIC microfiche collections and materials are found in every state and in more than 60 countries. More than 1,000 locations, typically university, state, and large city public libraries, have been designated as ERIC information service providers because they maintain a substantial microfiche collection, perform computer searches of the ERIC database on behalf of patrons, or offer patrons access to ERIC on CD-ROM.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION FOR A DIRECT LINK TO USERS

From its inception, the ERIC system has employed technology to fulfill its broader information dissemination goals. Early on, ERIC moved from exclusive reliance on the print index, *Resources in Education* (then *Research in Education*), to availability through an online service. ERIC is, in fact, File 1 on the DIALOG system. Similarly, ERIC was quick to capitalize on Compact Disk Read-Only Memory (CD-ROM) technology to make the ERIC database more accessible and affordable, particularly to school librarians and preservice and inservice teachers and administrators.

Today, anyone with access to a personal computer, communication software, and a modem can communicate electronically with others around the globe. In seconds, one can send and receive whole files of information as well as access bulletin boards and tap into databases. The ERIC system realizes the importance of reaching out to this growing and increasingly sophisticated computer network community. ERIC is, in fact, becoming recognized as the leading source for education information on computer networks. This section highlights ERIC's network activities.

Network Access to the ERIC Database

As noted in the preceding section, the ERIC database is becoming available through multiple computer networks. An increasing number of organizations, including universities and state education associations, are mounting the ERIC database onto their mainframe computers. The host institutions bear the responsibility for storing the database online, selecting search software, and determining access policies. At least four sites—Syracuse University, Auburn University, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill—allow Internet users from outside their immediate academic communities to access ERIC resources.

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, which covers technology trends in education, tracks Internet access points to ERIC and has compiled instructions for various public host sites in a guide called *ERIC Networker*. The other ERIC Clearinghouses and

ACCESS ERIC help distribute this information to the many interested users.

AskERIC, An Internet-Based Service for K–12 Educators

In November 1992, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources (ERIC/IR) began operating AskERIC, a prototype Internet-based electronic question-answering, help, and referral service. Although it is primarily targeted to teachers, media specialists, and administrators, anyone involved with K–12 education who has questions about learning, teaching, information technology, or educational administration can "AskERIC" by sending an e-mail question to askeric@ericir.syr.edu. Drawing on the extensive resources of the ERIC system and their knowledge of other education resources available on the Internet, AskERIC information specialists respond with an e-mail answer within 48 hours. ERIC Clearinghouses are asked to provide additional information in their specialty areas to AskERIC users when needed.

AskERIC began its service with three selected state networks—NYSERNet (New York State), TENET (Texas), and SENDIT (North Dakota). It now responds to 300 information requests per week from educators across the U.S. and even in other countries, including Canada and Australia. In addition, because educators were interested in each other's questions, ERIC/IR established the AskERIC Electronic Library, an online repository of education resources, including AskERIC questions and answers, ERIC database searches, information guides, and selected full-text documents. Popular topics include alternative assessment, grouping practices, whole language, and education technology. Approximately 7,000 to 9,500 individuals download information from the AskERIC Electronic Library each week using either FTP (file transfer protocol) or Gopher, an information retrieval service.

AskERIC provides educators with ERIC resources tailored to their particular information needs and supports them in exploring and using other education resources on the Internet. At this point, AskERIC is a pilot Internet development and research project funded by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the ERIC program and the Department's SMARTLINE initiative, which will make extensive educational resources available at workstations in schools. Given the widespread interest in networking within the K–12 community, AskERIC has great potential.

ERIC Resources on Other Online Services

ACCESS ERIC, the outreach component of the ERIC system, is coordinating ERIC's relationships with other online services, including America Online, GTE, and America Tomorrow. In December 1992, an ERIC information bulletin board operated by ACCESS ERIC became available on America Online. The bulletin board, included in the Teachers' Information Network–Resource Pavilion section of the Learning and Reference file, offers general information about ERIC, a library of selected systemwide publications, including *A Pocket Guide to ERIC* and *Internet Access Points to ERIC*, and topical packages containing

full-text ERIC Digests, ERIC database searches, and referrals to other information sources. The packages, covering such issues as school restructuring, professional development, and portfolio assessment, are developed in collaboration with the relevant ERIC Clearinghouses. To date, these files have been downloaded more than 2,500 times.

The America Online bulletin board also features a message center for dialogue between interested users and ACCESS ERIC staff. Discussions have ranged from increasing access to the ERIC database for home computer users to supporting state teacher education initiatives. ACCESS ERIC will continue to maintain this bulletin board while adding an online ordering system for ERIC Clearinghouse publications and paper copies of ERIC documents.

ERIC information is also available on the following services:

- **GTE Education Services.** GTE hosts the following reference and referral databases produced by ACCESS ERIC: the 525-record *ERIC Calendar of Education-Related Conferences*, the 400-record *ERIC Directory of Education-Related Information Centers*, and the 1,000-record *Directory of ERIC Information Service Providers*. GTE also provides access to the ERIC Digests Online file, which contains the full text of more than 1,000 two-page research syntheses produced by the ERIC Clearinghouses.

- **America Tomorrow.** ACCESS ERIC provides this online network of education, business, and community leaders with general information about ERIC, education-related information for teachers and parents in a question-answer format, and selected ERIC Digests that were included in the systemwide publication, *Striving for Excellence: The National Education Goals*.

In 1993, ACCESS ERIC will expand its electronic outreach on behalf of the ERIC system to other online services, including CompuServe, the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education's SERVE-Line, and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Program's IKElinks. The services provided, which will vary according to each network's constituency and capacity, are expected to include message boards, general ERIC information, topical packages, reference and referral databases, and online ordering systems.

ERIC Uses Networks To Enhance User Services, Outreach, and Dissemination Activities

The ERIC system uses the Internet for internal communication (e-mail), document transmittal, and bibliographic data transmission. Each ERIC component also has a well-publicized general Internet address for handling user requests via e-mail.

The Clearinghouses are increasingly using the electronic information infrastructure to respond to user needs in a direct and timely manner. In some form or another, all the Clearinghouses use networks to perform outreach and dissemination activities as well as to enhance user

services. A few examples from 1992 follow:

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education developed a program to train New York City school teachers and administrators in searching the ERIC database on the New York City Educational Network. That Clearinghouse also established an URBAN.ED bulletin board on GTE and an URBAN.ED newsgroup on SCHLNet to develop a closer relationship with urban educators throughout the country. Through these services, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education offers abstracts of key documents recently added to the database, as well as announcements of monographs and the full text of recent Digests.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education announced the availability of its "No-Cost Resources" list over ADENET, the adult education electronic communication system with more than 400 participants in nine countries.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children shares information about Clearinghouse products and services on SpecialNet through the Council of Exceptional Children's bulletin board, CEC News, and a new bulletin board on gifted education, called GIFTED.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics posts ERIC Digests and newsletter articles on the Foreign Language Education Forum's electronic bulletin board available through CompuServe.

- The director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools serves on the editorial board of a new electronic journal, *Educational Policy Archives*, available through the Internet. The journal is associated with the EDPOLYAN listserv (an electronic discussion group), a forum for education scholars, practitioners, and graduate students to discuss critical education policy issues such as educational equity, education finance, and the aims of education.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, in cooperation with the American Association of School Librarians, created and manages the LM_NET listserv for the school library media community. LM_NET subscribers receive copies of the Clearinghouse's newsletter, Digests, and other publications electronically.

ERIC will continue to focus on the needs of educators by offering information in multiple formats (e.g., paper-copy, microfiche, CD-ROM, and online), while working to support higher levels of technology use by school practitioners. Toward this goal, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources and ACCESS ERIC began in 1992 to prepare an issue of the theme journal, *The ERIC Review*, devoted to K–12 computer networking. The issue explores computer networking in elementary and secondary schools, serving as an introduction to the topic and providing an overview of some of the education-related information and services

accessible through various computer networks. The paper copy of this issue will reach 35,000 practitioners; countless others will access it electronically through the AskERIC Electronic Library, the Cleveland Free-Net, the OERI Bulletin Board, SERVE-Line, and other sources.

DATABASE BUILDING

The ERIC database—the world's most well-developed and widely used education information resource—contains bibliographic citations that cover education issues, academic subjects, professional development and training, special populations, and much more. The database encompasses a wide variety of materials, including research reports and syntheses, program descriptions and evaluations, curricula and instructional materials, trends and issues papers, monographs, and journal articles.

ERIC has placed increasing emphasis on acquiring and processing materials that describe exemplary programs and promising practices. In 1992, ERIC added 13,025 documents and 18,792 journal articles to the database (see Exhibit 3). Nearly 30 percent of this literature was targeted specifically to practitioners.

Exhibit 3: Total Number of Records for *RIE* and *CIJE*

FILE	NUMBER OF RECORDS		
	1966-1991	1992	TOTAL
Resources in Education (*RIE*), 1966-	328,394	13,025	341,419
Current Index to Journals in Education (*CIJE*), 1969-	430,750	18,792	449,542
TOTAL	759,144	31,817	790,961

Increasing Quality Acquisitions

ERIC Acquisitions Arrangements (EAAs) form the core of ERIC's acquisition program. EAAs are formal agreements that ERIC makes with relevant organizations and agencies to acquire significant education documents in the Clearinghouse scope areas and ensuring continuous contributions to the database. In 1992, the Clearinghouses negotiated 169 new acquisition agreements.

The ERIC Clearinghouses execute numerous other strategies to acquire material for the ERIC database. These include:

- Soliciting papers, documents, and journals from professional organizations and associations as well as from individual practitioners and researchers;
- Collecting materials and documents at regional, national, and international conferences and workshops;
- Networking with colleagues and members of professional organizations;
- Monitoring new periodicals in the scope areas for future coverage in *CIJE*;
- Reviewing the education press and professional association publications; and
- Monitoring computer discussion groups (listservs) to find names of potential authors as well as specific papers for possible submission into the database.

The selection and input of materials for *RIE* and *CIJE* entails a rigorous and thorough screening process. Using the criteria outlined in the *ERIC Processing Manual*, Clearinghouse staff examine documents for substantive quality. Quality includes, but is not limited to, timeliness, significant contribution to knowledge, relevance, innovative practices, and thoroughness/effectiveness of presentation. Only those materials judged to be of high merit, perceived usefulness, and good reproducibility are processed into the database. ERIC's selectivity is demonstrated by the fact that nearly one-third of the documents submitted in the past five years have been rejected (see Exhibit 4).

Expanded Coverage

ERIC continues to improve and expand the database. Starting with the new Clearinghouse contracts to be awarded in mid-1993, the Clearinghouses will be required to systematically acquire and process the major education book literature for inclusion in the ERIC database. The book literature input is expected to total between 800 and 1,000 volumes each year. Most publishers are expected to request that their books be entered as Level III documents; in other words, they will be announced in the ERIC database, but will not be made available by ERIC on microfiche or in paper copy. In addition to adding books, Clearinghouses will be expected to provide increased emphasis on acquiring and processing materials that describe individual exemplary programs and promising practices.

ERIC is participating in several activities designed both to expand the overseas dissemination of U.S-developed education information and to broaden access to foreign-produced materials.

For example, ERIC is cooperating with ERIC-equivalent organizations in other English-speaking countries to develop an integrated database.

The Future: Full-Text Products

ERIC strives to capitalize on advances in telecommunications, storage and retrieval technologies, and information policies in order to provide enhanced service. ERIC staff continually assess the impact of technology on ERIC operations. Many institutions, including ERIC, are progressing toward full-text document delivery. As a first step, ERIC has created the ERIC Digests Online (EDO) file, which contains the full text of more than 1,000 two-page research syntheses produced by the ERIC Clearinghouses. The EDO file is now available online through DIALOG and GTE and will become available in 1993 on Dialog's and SilverPlatter's CD-ROM products. The EDO file is also available to Internet users at various host sites, including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and SURANet. Personal computer users may also access the full-text of the ERIC Digests through a software application called *Query* from LPM Associates. In 1993, the EDO file will be expanded to include research syntheses from non-ERIC sources such as the U.S. Department of Education's National Research and Development Centers and Regional Educational Laboratories.

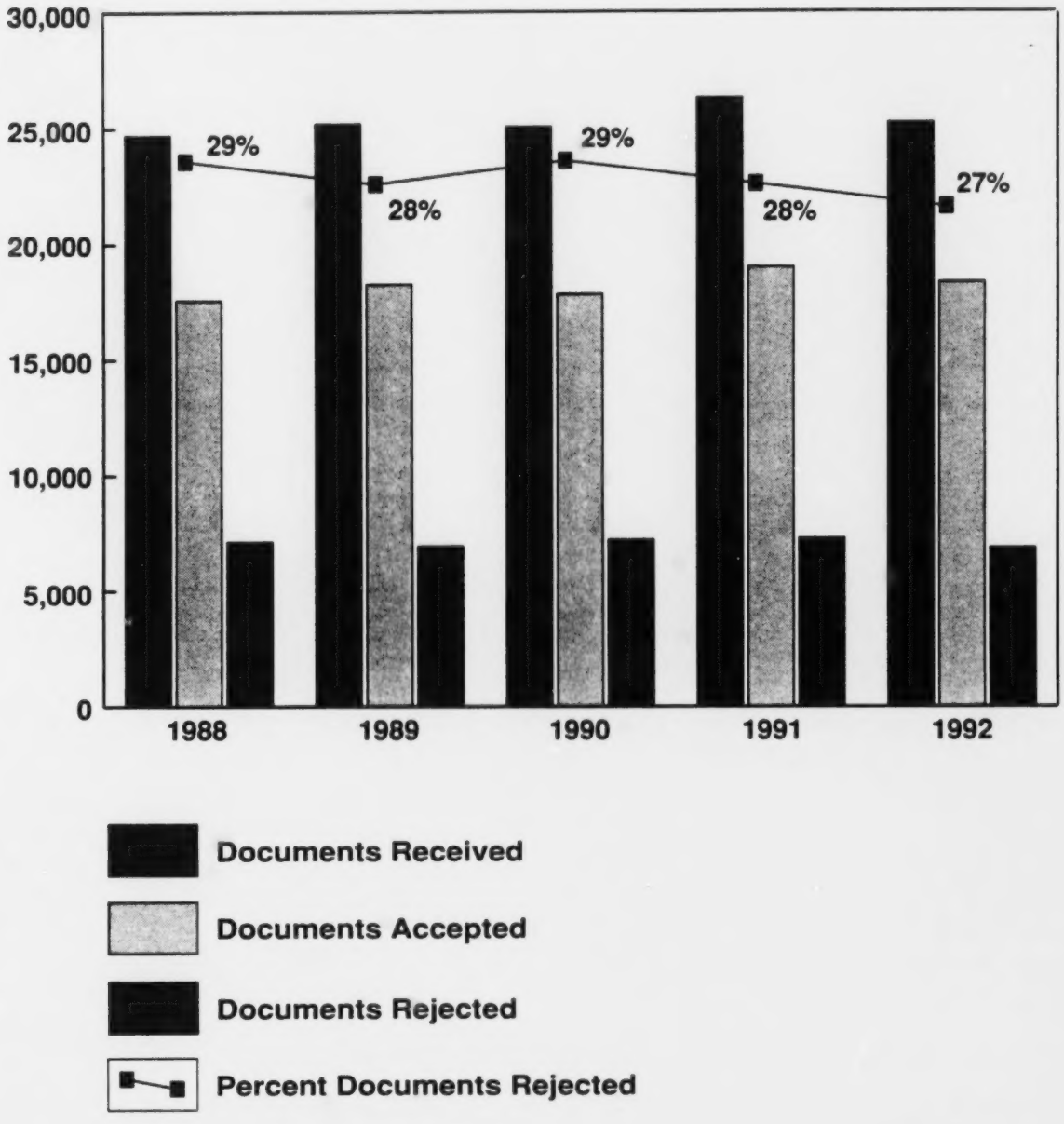
As an obvious next step, ERIC foresees products that will store the full text of selected ERIC documents on optical media; prototypes are under development. Cincinnati Bell Information Systems, Inc., which operates the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, unveiled a prototype of a full-text CD-ROM product in 1992. The product consisted of *RIE* and *CIJE* indexes and electronic images of selected exemplary documents identified by the Clearinghouses.

In anticipation of such products, ERIC has, since 1990, retained copies of the original documents accessioned into its database, in the event that they should be needed for scanning purposes. Since the first generation of such products is apt to be selective rather than comprehensive, the ERIC Clearinghouses continue to select from the database excellent examples of research and policy documents as well as practitioner-oriented materials. These materials, representing the "best of ERIC," may form the core of new full-text products that can be offered online and on CD-ROM.

USER SERVICES

The ERIC system works to facilitate exchange between information producers and users to improve education practice. Over the years, ERIC has committed itself to reaching beyond its traditional audience of university professors and librarians, researchers, and graduate students to include more diverse user groups, particularly K–12 teachers and administrators, school librarians, policymakers, journalists, parents, and community members. To achieve this goal, ERIC has:

Exhibit 4 Document Acceptance vs. Rejection, 1988–1992



Between 1988 and 1992, 126,439 documents were received and 35,448 were rejected, for an overall rejection rate of 28%.

- Established ACCESS ERIC, an outreach and referral component accessible through the toll-free phone number, 1–800–LET–ERIC.

- Developed and disseminated ERIC resources for target audiences, for example, brochures for parents and teachers on reading skills, homework, and the like; a video, overhead transparencies, and a guidebook for parents and preservice teachers on searching the ERIC database; a general-interest journal, *The ERIC Review*, to help educators put research into practice; and a compilation of ERIC Digests on the National Education Goals.

- Increased conference exhibits, presentations, and mailings focused on practitioners.

- Funded user services staff at each Clearinghouse to respond to subject-specific inquiries, offer reference and referral, provide database searches and search strategies, conduct training workshops, and exhibit at conferences.

These strategies have paid off. In 1992, ACCESS ERIC, the ERIC Clearinghouses, and the ERIC Facility received nearly 110,000 inquiries—in the form of letters (61,792), telephone calls (35,791), visitors (7,955), and electronic mail (4,342). Electronic mail and telephone access, in particular, have grown in popularity in recent years (see Figure 5). An additional 17,525 phone calls were logged in 1992 by the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, which provides microfiche and paper copies of ERIC documents. Of the total information requests received, about 30 percent were from teachers and administrators (see Exhibit 6). And more than 3,000 parents contacted ERIC in 1992.

The ERIC system responds to user requests in a variety of ways: by providing answers to specific questions; sending requested materials such as Digests, newsletters, and bibliographies; searching the ERIC database or the reference and referral databases produced by ACCESS ERIC; or referring the inquirer to other agencies.

During 1992, Clearinghouse user services staff performed 5,926 on-demand searches of the ERIC database. Nearly 700 of these were performed by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, which, because it serves many isolated and low-income schools, offers free, custom searches of the database to rural educators. Clearinghouses also responded to many callers seeking advice, instructions, and descriptors to use in their own searching. As Exhibit 7 shows, the overall number of database searches provided by the Clearinghouses is going down, largely due to the fact that the ERIC database is now more accessible to end users than ever before.

Training Sessions Promote ERIC in the Field

The ERIC system conducts many workshops and training sessions tailored to the information needs of specific groups, agencies, and institutions. Such activities help create awareness of

ERIC as a major repository and disseminator of education information and provide an opportunity for ERIC staff to interact personally with practitioner audiences to identify their needs and interests, get feedback on products and services, and convey ERIC's interest in building its database through field-generated documents.

In 1992, the ERIC system conducted more than 150 workshops and training sessions. A few examples are included below to convey the extent of ERIC's commitment to this method of serving users.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education conducted 48 workshops in preservice teacher education classes, school districts, and traditional conference settings. The Clearinghouse offers several types of training programs: (1) an introduction to the ERIC system and Clearinghouse; (2) a session on how to search the ERIC database; (3) an acquisitions-oriented workshop aimed at classroom teachers, supervisors, and teacher trainers; (4) a research-based workshop developed from the database and presented to classroom teachers and department heads; and (5) a subject-oriented workshop that demonstrates to practitioners the resources ERIC can provide for classroom use.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services designed and conducted a number of professional development workshops in collaboration with professional associations such as the American Counseling Association and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.

- Among its many training sessions, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education conducted a workshop at the Fort Myer Job Assistance Center for career counselors working with military personnel seeking careers in teaching. Because the Clearinghouse's scope also includes health education, staff conducted a well-attended user workshop, entitled "ERIC: Quick and Easy Access to Current Health and Physical Education Information" at the annual meeting of the American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

- As part of its user services to rural educators, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools conducted a workshop for staff and clients of the Alaska Native Technical Assistance Center VI in Anchorage to introduce them to ERIC on CD-ROM and the Internet.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges conducted one of its most successful workshops for institutions with ERIC microfiche collections in September 1992. While attendance typically averages 15 to 25 community college librarians, this session, which included information on accessing ERIC via the Internet, drew 42.

Exhibit 5 Methods Used To Contact ERIC Components, 1988–1992

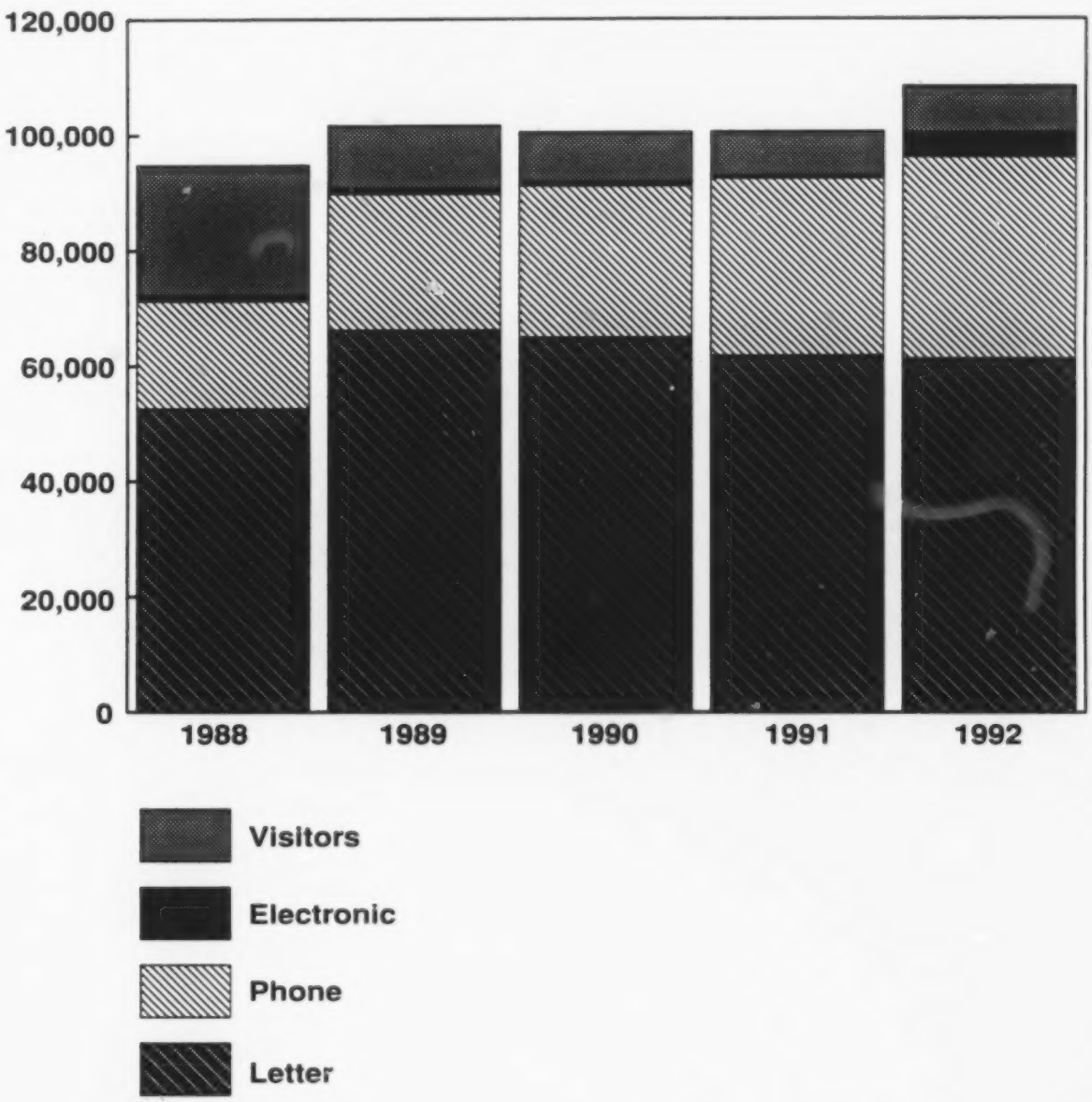
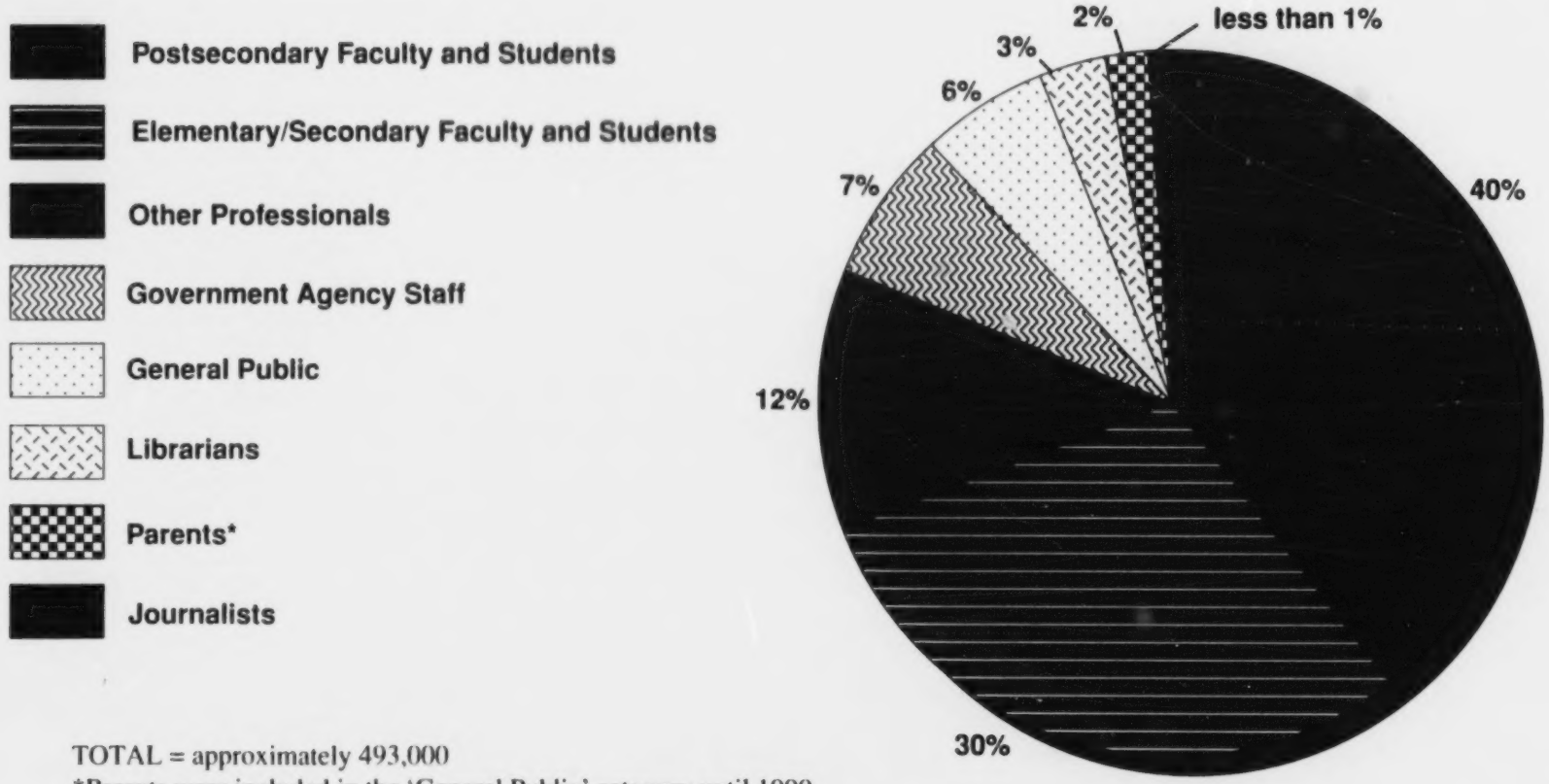
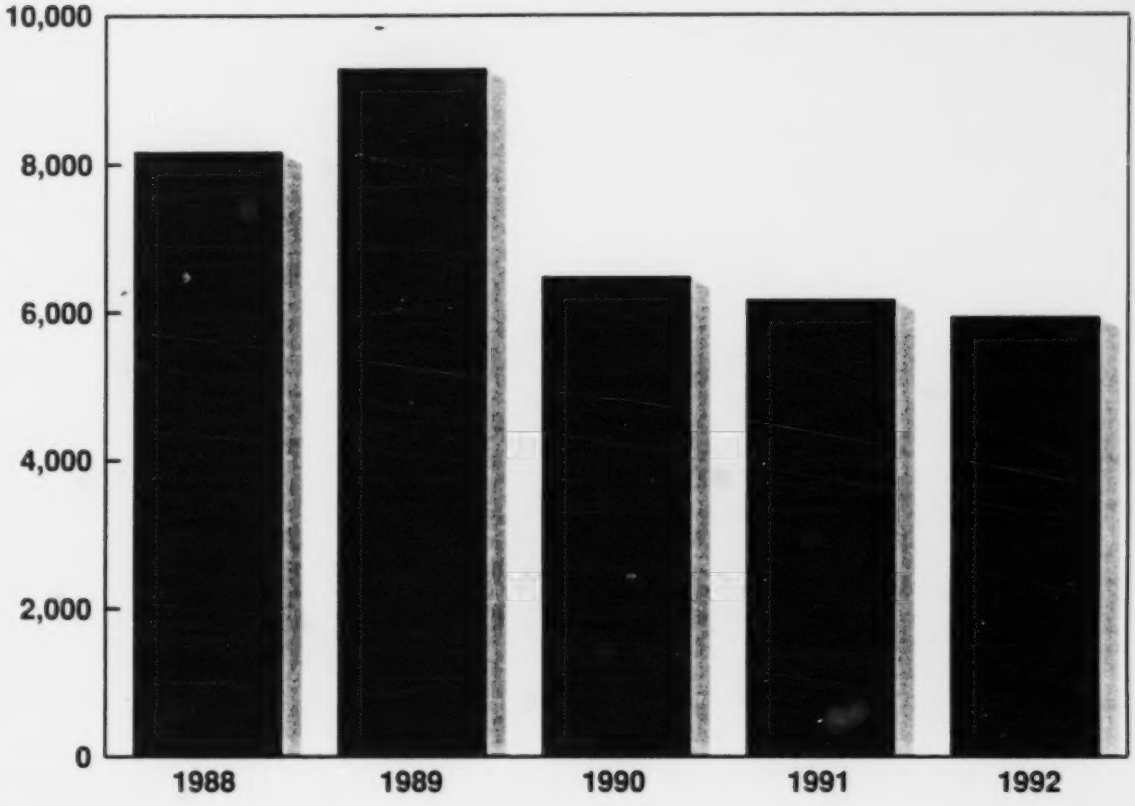


Exhibit 6 Analysis of ERIC Users, 1988–1992



TOTAL = approximately 493,000
*Parents were included in the 'General Public' category until 1990.

Exhibit 7 Searches Completed by ERIC Clearinghouses, 1988–1992



Responding to User Needs

ERIC components routinely seek feedback from users in order to improve products and services and be responsive to their evolving information needs. The ERIC system conducts ongoing assessment, both formally, through surveys such as a 1991 questionnaire completed by 1,000 individuals, and informally. Among the various techniques used are:

- Analyzing the thousands of information requests received each year;
- Soliciting comments from advisory board members;
- Networking with contacts across the country, including educators, business leaders, professional association leaders, and government agency staff;
- Obtaining written evaluations from workshop participants;
- Surveying partners and major institutions offering access to the ERIC database and microfiche collection; and
- Considering priorities of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement and the U.S. Department of Education.

Such assessment activity often leads to new products and services. For example, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills distributed a detailed questionnaire to all users asking about the content and types of publications they needed as well as the desired format. Survey results guided the staff in developing publications that better respond to the information needs of the Clearinghouse's diverse audiences. For instance, the 1992 bestseller, *101 Ideas to Help Your Child Learn to Read and Write*, will soon be reissued in a bilingual Spanish/English format with new artwork for a Spanish-reading audience.

Among the many recent products and services developed specifically to meet the information needs of target audiences were the following:

- Topical bibliographies from the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges customized for distribution at such conferences as the National Association for Partners in Education, Drug-Free Schools and Communities, and the Community Education Association.
- The References on Disk series, cumulative indices of the *Journal of Educational Measurement, Educational Measurement, Journal of Educational Statistics, Psychometrika, American Educational Research Journal*, and *Review of Educational Research* along with FINDIT—custom search software from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation. Each index contains author, article titles, bibliographic references,

descriptors, and identifiers to help in locating articles.

- *The MAGnet* newsletter, a publication of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood focused on mixed-age grouping practices.

- *ERIC Networker*, a guide for the growing number of Internet users interested in access to ERIC, produced by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources and disseminated in both print and electronic copy.

- Free bibliographies on topics such as school restructuring, school-based management, and multicultural education prepared for teachers, administrators, and school librarians by the ERIC Document Reproduction Service. These bibliographies alert practitioners to a sampling of highly relevant practitioner-oriented ERIC materials.

- Resource packages on each of the six National Education Goals highlighting relevant database acquisitions, ERIC Digests, and education-related information centers. These packages were distributed on demand to America 2000 communities.

- ERIC Digests focused on teaching adults for whom English is a second language from the National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education for Limited-English-Proficient Adults and Out-of-School Youth, an adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse.

With education restructuring efforts such as the New American Schools and the National Education Goals at the forefront of our nation's agenda, the ERIC system must continue to provide users with dependable information about education. As the system contemplates and researches new directions for ERIC's future, including expanded international activities and full-text delivery of education materials, user service activities must expand as well to respond to a broader audience and help all users take full advantage of the services offered.

PUBLICATIONS AND OUTREACH

To reach current and potential users, ERIC implements multiple outreach and dissemination methods, including print, audiovisual and telecommunications media, and personal contacts. ERIC is particularly interested in nontraditional users, including practitioners, parents, and preservice teachers. The ERIC components have developed comprehensive outreach and dissemination programs that complement their user services programs. This section highlights unique major publications and outreach activities for 1992.

Publications Program

Recognizing that the information needs of users often vary in terms of comprehensiveness and complexity, ERIC offers a full and diverse line of publications, ranging from easy-to-read research summaries and brochures for parents and teachers through monographs designed primarily for researchers.

In 1992, the ERIC Clearinghouses produced more than 150 ERIC Digests and 80 major publications such as books and monographs. Exhibit 8 highlights the ERIC bestsellers. In addition, the Clearinghouses published some 200 journal articles and columns as well as more than 250 other publications, such as annotated bibliographies, issues papers, resource lists, and bulletins. Altogether, the Clearinghouses distributed more than 1.5 million publications directly and an additional 622,000 pieces through secondary sources such as professional associations. ACCESS ERIC distributed an additional quarter-of-a-million publications on behalf of the ERIC system.

ERIC publication types include:

- **ERIC Digests**: two-page documents summarizing current information on specific education topics. All Clearinghouses produce Digests. Compilations of ERIC Digests are also available, including *CounselorQuest*, available from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services, and *Striving for Excellence: The National Education Goals*, available from ACCESS ERIC.

- **ERIC Monographs/Reports**: more comprehensive publications, generally 30 pages or longer, that summarize the research in a particular field, highlight recent studies and their implications, or examine important education trends and issues. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education offers a popular monograph series, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Reports, in conjunction with the Association for the Study of Higher Education.

- **Searches and Annotated Bibliographies**: lists available from all Clearinghouses that direct the reader to carefully selected documents or materials organized by topic area.

- **Directories and Resource Guides**: materials that direct users to primary sources of information, institutions or associations that provide services to the public, or exemplary programs and practices. Examples include *An Early Start: A Resource Guide to Elementary School Foreign Languages* from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics and *Programs and Practices in Gifted Education* from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children.

- **Systemwide Publications**: brochures, newsletters, fact sheets, and booklets that introduce individuals and organizations to the resources of ERIC and support them in their search for relevant education information. Examples of the free systemwide publications available include *A Pocket Guide to ERIC*, *All About ERIC*, *ERIC Users' Interchange*, and *The ERIC Review* from ACCESS ERIC, and Ready References such as "Sample Document Resume" and "ERIC Publication Types" from the ERIC Processing and Reference Facility.

Many of the subject-area Clearinghouses, including Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education, Social Studies/Social Science Education, and Languages and Linguistics, also offer low-cost curriculum resources. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills has developed an extensive curriculum series called TRIED (Teaching Resources in the ERIC Database), which offers detailed lesson plans based on exemplary materials on such topics as developing critical thinking and promoting writing.

Outreach Activities

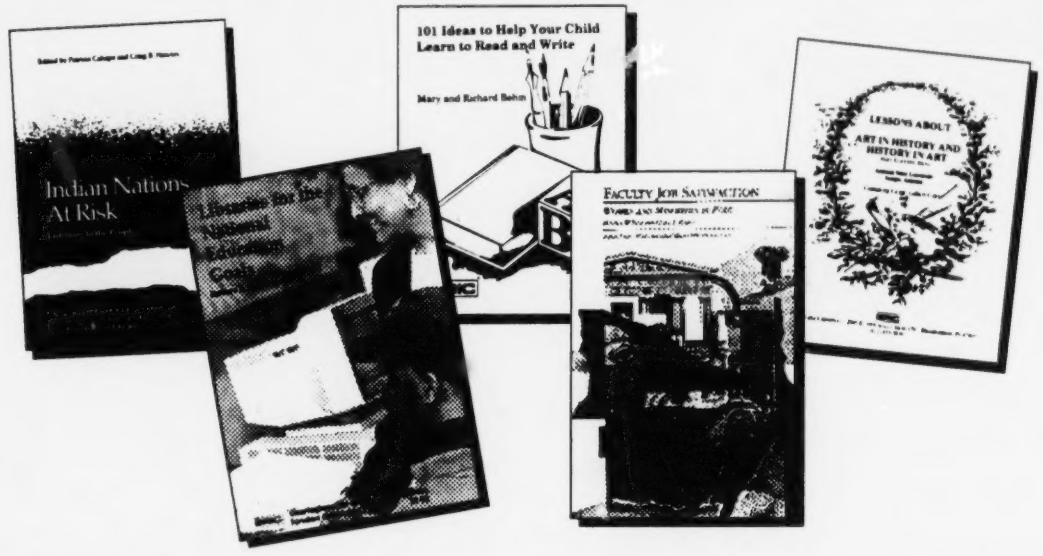
Last year, ERIC system personnel staffed exhibits at nearly 150 conferences and provided materials for many additional conferences and meetings at which staff, because of funding limitations, could not be present. In addition, staff members made presentations at nearly 400 professional meetings and events. Conferences and meetings are an excellent forum for promoting ERIC and reaching out to new users.

For example, the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges operated a booth at the annual convention of the American Association of Community Colleges. Staff conducted more than 50 onsite searches and returned with requests for an additional 20 searches. The Clearinghouse distributed 339 topical bibliographies and 275 ERIC Digests as well as systemwide materials and publications from other Clearinghouses. More than 100 books were sold, and 22 people were added to the Clearinghouse's mailing list.

Other ERIC outreach efforts have been as diverse as the Clearinghouse subject areas. Below is just a sampling of 1992 activities:

- The ERIC Clearinghouses on Rural Education and Small Schools (ERIC/CRESS) and on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (ERIC/ACVE) provided camera-ready copy for mass duplication of their materials. ERIC/CRESS distributed 5,300 sets of camera-ready articles geared to parents, nearly two-and-a-half times the number distributed the previous year. The articles were also sent to editors of 750 rural, American Indian, and Spanish-language newsweeklies around the nation. ERIC/ACVE made camera-ready copies of dozens of its popular ERIC Digests available on demand.

Exhibit 8 ERIC Bestsellers


Indian Nations At Risk
101 Ideas to Help Your Child Learn to Read and Write
Mary and Richard Behm
FACULTY JOB SATISFACTION
LESSONS ABOUT
ART IN HISTORY AND HISTORY IN ART

Adult, Career, and Vocational Education: *A Multicultural Focus on Career Education* (ED 341 877)
Art Education: *Lessons About Art in History and History in Art* (ED 348 297)
Consumer Education: *Consumer Competency: A National Status Report* (EDO-CN-92-01)
Counseling and Personnel Services: *Helping Children Cope with Fears and Stress* (ED 348 625); *Learning Styles Counseling* (ED 333 308)
Educational Management: *School Leadership: Handbook for Excellence* (ED 309 504)
Elementary and Early Childhood Education: *The Teacher's Role in the Social Development of Young Children* (ED 331 642)
Handicapped and Gifted Children: *Exceptional Children At Risk (Mini-Library Series of 11 books)* (ED 339 164 through ED 339 174)
Higher Education: *Higher Education Report Series* (various ED numbers)
Information Resources: *Libraries for the National Education Goals* (ED 345 752)
Junior Colleges: *New Directions for Community Colleges Series* (various ED numbers)
Languages and Linguistics: *Learning to See: American Sign Language as a Second Language* (ED 332 533)
Literacy Education for Limited-English-Proficient Adults: *Writing Our Lives: Reflections on Dialogue Journal Writing with Adults Learning English* (ED 333 763)
Reading and Communication Skills: *101 Ideas to Help Your Child Learn to Read and Write* (ED 314 737)
Rural Education and Small Schools: *Indian Nations at Risk: Listening to the People* (ED 339 588)
Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education: *Physical Science Activities for Elementary and Middle School* (ED 295 781)
Social Studies/Social Science Education: *Resources for Teachers on the Bill of Rights* (ED 329 489)
Teacher Education: *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for the 1990s and Beyond* (ED 339 698)
Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation: *Understanding Achievement Tests: A Guide for School Administrators* (ED 314 426) and *Legal Issues in Testing* (ED 320 964)
Urban Education: *School Programs for African American Male Students* (ED 334 338)
U.S.-Japan: *Internationalizing the U.S. Classroom: Japan as a Model* (ED 343 842)

- On a pilot basis, ERIC Clearinghouses have placed ERIC resources (e.g., ERIC on CD-ROM, an EDRS collection of ERIC documents on microfiche) directly into schools and school districts. The Clearinghouses have provided technical assistance to ensure that information is accessible.

- ACCESS ERIC began contacting the inservice coordinators at the state departments of education to determine their training priorities and their familiarity with ERIC resources. Following a phone interview, the coordinators were mailed a customized package of ERIC Digests, systemwide publications, and referrals.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management operated a highly successful secondary dissemination program through professional organizations and state education agencies. For example, the National Association of Secondary School Principals reprinted and distributed four ERIC Digests to each of its 41,000 members, the National Association of Elementary School Principals printed and distributed three issues of the *Research Roundup* to each of its 25,000 members, and several ERIC Digests were reprinted in journals of state school boards associations through the Clearinghouse's cooperative relationship with the National School Boards Association.

- When Hurricane Andrew devastated Florida and Louisiana, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services provided complimentary copies of a module-based program to assist school counselors in establishing student support groups for coping with natural disasters and tragedies resulting from crime, violence, and accidents.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education mailed informational packages about ERIC to 10,000 individuals and groups on the American Council of Education's Minority Affairs mailing list, inviting them to submit materials to ERIC and to call for information about accessing the database.

- ACCESS ERIC and the ERIC Document Reproduction Service sent a joint mailing to the nation's 17,000 school superintendents to invite them to order free systemwide publications and ERIC bibliographies and to request information about accessing the ERIC database and contacting ERIC Clearinghouses.

COLLABORATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL LIAISONS

Components of the ERIC system undertake two types of collaborative activities: those involving other Education Department-sponsored programs (e.g., National Research and Development Centers and Regional Educational Laboratories) and those with professional associations and education-related organizations.

Collaborations with Other Federally Funded Programs

ERIC has taken the lead in forging cooperative and mutually beneficial links with other federally sponsored education groups. For example, Clearinghouses have made acquisitions arrangements with the Labs and Centers to ensure that their state-of-the-art publications are available through ERIC. Staff from the Labs and Centers often serve as reviewers for ERIC-produced materials and announce ERIC resources in print and electronically. ERIC supports initiatives of the U.S. Department of Education as appropriate. Examples of recent collaborations are sketched below:

- The ERIC system received funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement's SMARTLINE initiative to support networking initiatives and conduct pilot research and development activities such as the AskERIC Internet-based service for educators and the addition of full-text research syntheses from non-ERIC sources to the ERIC Digests Online file.

- ERIC continues to develop materials related to the National Education Goals and to support AMERICA 2000 communities by distributing materials as requested.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools collaborated in the development of the White House Conference on Indian Education; with an initiative of the National Center for Education Statistics to develop standard definitions concerning comparisons of large rural, suburban, and urban districts; and with the Native Education Initiative of the Regional Educational Laboratories.

- The director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education serves on the advisory board of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. The Clearinghouse mails its newsletter, Digests, and major publications to all 50 state offices of the National Diffusion Network.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education and the Environmental Protection Agency worked together to promote each other's environmental education publications.

- The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands is marketing *At-Risk Families and Schools: Becoming Partners*, a title from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, in its publications catalog.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education served as a cosponsor of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's conference, "Work Now and in the Future," providing speaker suggestions, handouts, on-site database searches, and general conference planning.

Collaborations with ERIC Partners

The ERIC partnership program was designed to expand ERIC's presence in the education community and to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of outreach and dissemination strategies. ERIC Partners are organizations and associations that develop reciprocal agreements with an ERIC Clearinghouse or ACCESS ERIC. Partners help promote ERIC among their constituencies by providing ERIC information through their newsletters, journals, and mailings. They may submit documents for the ERIC database and encourage their constituents to do so as well. They may also engage in joint projects such as workshops, conferences, mailings, and publications. In return, ERIC components provide services to their partners according to their resources and their partners' needs. Common benefits include VIP service in processing user requests; free or discounted ERIC publications; technical assistance and support; and reciprocal promotions of products and services.

In recent years, ERIC has successfully expanded the partnership program to include 500 organizations and has increased collaborations with these partners. The following highlights suggest the range and mutually beneficial nature of these partnerships:

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education has arranged to prepare columns for its partners' journals, including *Childhood Education* (Association for Childhood Education International) and *Middle School Journal* (National Middle Schools Association). The ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education writes a column for the journal of the National Council for the Social Studies; the ERIC Clearinghouse on Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation prepares one for *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practices*.

- The ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources forged a partnership with the National Forum on Information Literacy, an umbrella group for nonprofit organizations committed to promoting the importance of people becoming effective information users. Members of the Forum include the American Library Association, the National Education Association, the National Association of Counties, the American Newspaper Publishers Association, and the Information Industry Association. The Forum agreed that ERIC would become the repository for relevant NFIL papers, and that ERIC/IR would collaborate with the Forum on the publication of Digests, brochures, and monographs.

- With its partner, the International Reading Association, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills copublishes and distributes a popular series of parent booklets. Nearly 23,000 copies of one title of the series, *Helping Your Child Become a Reader*, have been distributed since 1989.

- The Clinical Schools Clearinghouse is a joint project of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education and the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education's Clinical Schools Project. The function of this project is to collect and process literature related to the use of clinical schools for professional development and to develop related information products, including Digests, bibliographies, and articles.

International Activities

The *Australian Education Index* (*AEI*), *British Education Index* (*BEI*), and *Canadian Education Index* (*CEI*), together with ERIC, constitute an informal group know as "InterEd," aimed at improving cooperation, compatibility, and coordination among these organizations with similar interests. During 1992, a major event was the signing of an agreement with DIALOG for a single combined CD-ROM product to include *AEI*, *BEI*, and *CEI*, and to be called "International ERIC." ERIC continues to increase its global presence through international collaborations. The European online vendor DataStar (now owned by DIALOG) worked with the ERIC Facility to add the ERIC database to its online service in November 1992. DataStar joins DIALOG, BRS, and OCLC as one of the four major online services offering access to ERIC.

The International Association of Universities (IAU) in Paris launched an *International Bibliography of Higher Education* during 1992, based on contributions from the ministries of education (or equivalent organizations) from UNESCO member countries. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education (ERIC/HE) was designated the official contributor for the United States and makes the selection of items to be sent to IAU from the ERIC database on a quarterly basis. The ERIC Facility wrote a computer program to convert ERIC records into the required "IAUDOC" format.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

The ERIC Program staff within the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement sets ERIC system policy and manages and monitors the decentralized system of ERIC Clearinghouses and support components. ERIC's Executive Group comprises the OERI/ERIC Director, the directors of the ERIC Facility, ACCESS ERIC, and EDRS, and five Clearinghouse representatives. In addition to planning the agenda for the National Directors' Meeting, the Executive Group functions on an ongoing basis to keep all ERIC staff aware of, and involved in, new and emerging issues.

The National Technical Steering Committee serves as the vehicle through which ERIC's technical personnel recommend improvements and enhancements to the ERIC system. It includes a Clearinghouse chair, three additional staff from different Clearinghouses, technical representatives of the support contractors, and an ERIC program monitor. The Technical

Steering Committee is responsible for overseeing ERIC technical operations, including internal processing and services; recommending related policy changes; and conducting technical meetings.

ERIC Program staff and ERIC Clearinghouse and support component management convene twice a year to review program issues and discuss new goals and directions. Technical staff from the Clearinghouses and support components meet annually. In 1992, major issues addressed at the national meetings included:

- Total Quality Management and its implications for continuous improvement of the ERIC system;
- Using technology to improve the ERIC database and increase dissemination to users;
- Improving the quality of the database by exercising greater selectivity and more timely processing;
- Working collaboratively with other education-related information centers, including OERI-funded National Research Centers and Regional Educational Laboratories, to support the National Education Goals and school restructuring; and
- Sharing ideas to improve acquisitions, selection, and processing of documents and journal articles and to enhance user workshops and publications.

A number of policy issues arose during 1992. Chief among them was the ERIC Program's exploration of a proposal to collect royalties or usage fees from commercial and academic purchasers of the ERIC database tapes. ERIC currently realizes basic cost recovery for providing its tapes, but has not received any income from commercial or other use of its database. Such income might be applied to improving ERIC through initiatives such as full-text delivery or expanding training and technical assistance. Although reaction to the proposal was negative, ERIC received valuable input from ERIC users and associations, including the American Library Association.

Periodic recompetitions give ERIC an opportunity to re-evaluate its operations and direction. In Fall 1992, OERI/ERIC conducted a recompetition to award five-year contracts for the 16 ERIC Clearinghouses. In addition to traditional services, the Request for Proposals specified that the recipients of the Clearinghouse contracts offer a toll-free number, identify and process a select group of books within their subject scopes for the ERIC database, increase their use of technology to better serve users, and expand networking/collaborative projects with other components in the ERIC system.

The names of six Clearinghouses will change to more accurately reflect Clearinghouse scopes and current terminology when the new contracts are awarded: *Counseling and Personnel Services* will become *Counseling and Student Services*; *Handicapped and Gifted Children* will become *Disabilities and Gifted Education*; *Information Resources* will become *Information & Technology*; *Junior Colleges* will become *Community Colleges*; *Reading and Communication Skills* will become *Reading, English, and Communication*; *Teacher Education* will become *Teaching and Teacher Education*; and *Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation* will become *Assessment and Evaluation*. The Clearinghouse contracts will be awarded in Summer 1993.

SUMMARY

ERIC is committed to respond to the needs of practitioners and to assert leadership in the identification, acquisition, and dissemination of high-quality education information to improve teaching and learning. The past five years have been exciting ones for ERIC, particularly in the areas of increased collaboration with the field, expanded service to users, and responsiveness to U.S. education priorities. By capitalizing on advances in technology—such as the Internet and CD-ROM—we have been able to improve dramatically our tools for acquisition and dissemination of education information.

As we move closer to the year 2000, we anticipate the following:

- further growth in the number of access points to ERIC, particularly on public networks;
- continued progress toward full-text document delivery;
- ongoing emphasis on quality in the selection of journal articles, documents, books, and non-print materials for the database;
- additional support and technical assistance for practitioners, community members, and parents who wish to use ERIC resources; and
- frequent solicitation of feedback in order to ensure that ERIC continues to meet diverse education information needs.